

Lake Michigan

By Marilyn Zelke-Windau

To get to the lake
I had to walk two blocks,
go around a metal barricade,
flip-flop-slide down gravel
on a path sided with goldenrod,
nettles, and hemlock.

I had to jump off
a four foot formed cement wall
to sand—
sometimes to wet puddles
with seed floats brought by rainspring,
sometimes to a kitchen of alewives,
heat-drying, aided by flies,
summarily buzzing upward to my face.
Slippery leaves in fall felled me closer
to water's longer hem
and winter ice walls dripping sunsilver tinsel
cordoned me to sideskate backwards.

To get to the lake
I had to admit to the pull, the tidewant,
the beckoning.



Photo by Jessica Ruben

The lake of my childhood became my solace,
my sanctuary.
It inspired curious attempts at answers
and simultaneous questions
which knew no fill-in-the-blanks.

Each visit changed the world's colors:
steel blue to steel grey, azure to turquoise
to olive green in seaweed bloom,
cerulean to cobalt in seconds,
a range of reds reflected at sunset fire.

Each trip showed weather's new mood:
pancake flat plate, no wind, just calm,
undulating ruffle-making breeze
to flirt the shore,
gusts thrust from pitcher's mound loped
surprising waves to home,
swollen swells abused
black and blue their gritty domicile.

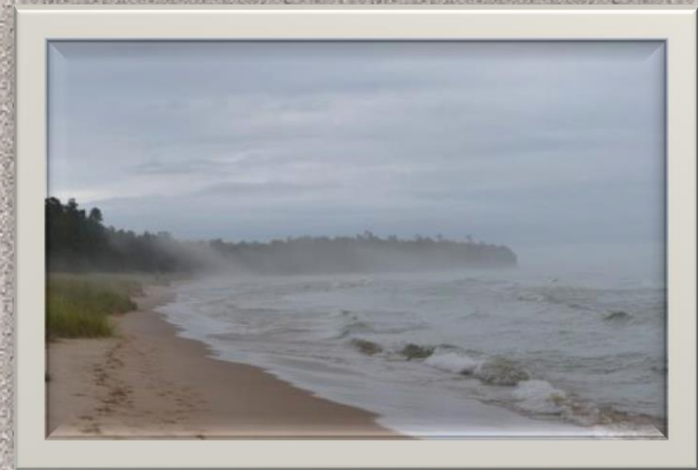


Photo by Sharyl Fischback



Photo by Steve Lowis

Far off, at that fuzzy line,
where water and sky conjoin,
stories grew.
Where the eye couldn't see,
the imagination saw.
The possibilities were mind sheets
to throw, and to tether.

Lifelong are these binds,
the ribbons of want return,
the ties of color comfort,
the weathered threads,
the cords of continuous flow.

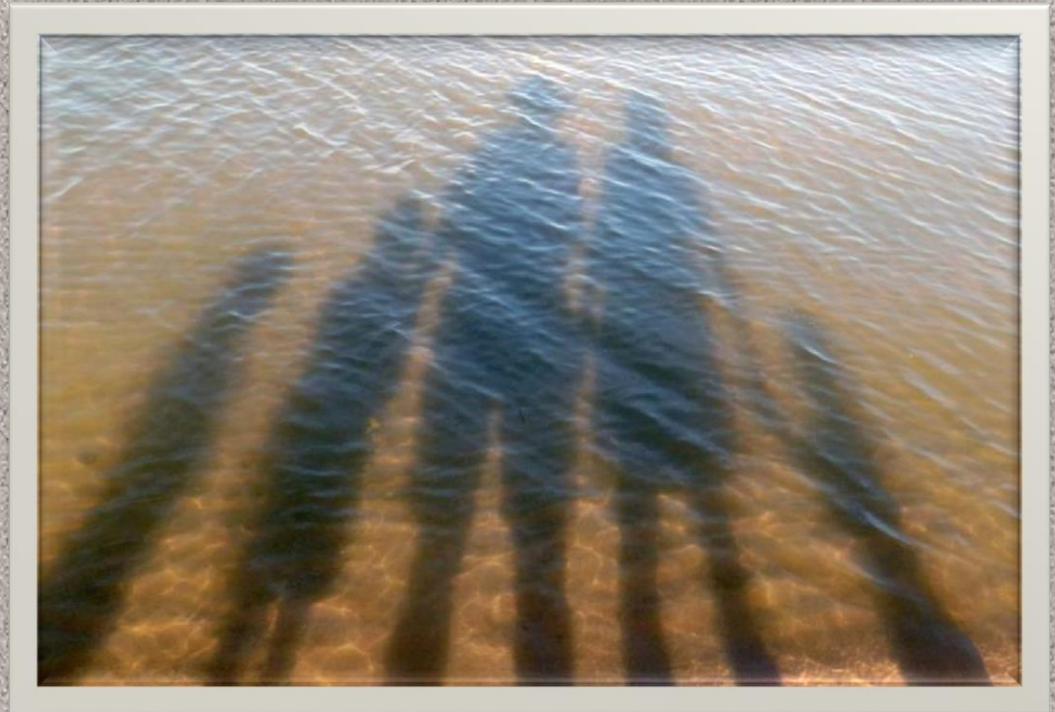


Photo by Mark Rice